

Copiah-Lincoln  
Junior College  
Wesson, Mississippi



Volume XIV  
Spring 1987





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# *Microcosm*



Spring, 1987  
Vol. XIV

## *Microcosm* . . .

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Each year the Division of Humanities of Copiah-Lincoln Junior College holds a literary competition for college students and for area high school students. Selected college entries compete in the Mississippi Junior College Creative Writing Association competition and in other competitions.

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Manuscripts for this year's competition were judged by the **Microcosm** staff, members of the Division of Humanities and Doris and Jim Bateman of Hazlehurst.

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The administration of Copiah-Lincoln Junior College: Billy B. Thames, President; Howell Garner, Dean of Instruction; Jim Kyzar, Business Manager; Alton Ricks, Dean of Students; Russell Ray, Director of Student Development; and Burlian Walker, Director of Public Information.

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## ON FIRST VIEWING MY FATHER'S HAND

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*Chris Nesmith*

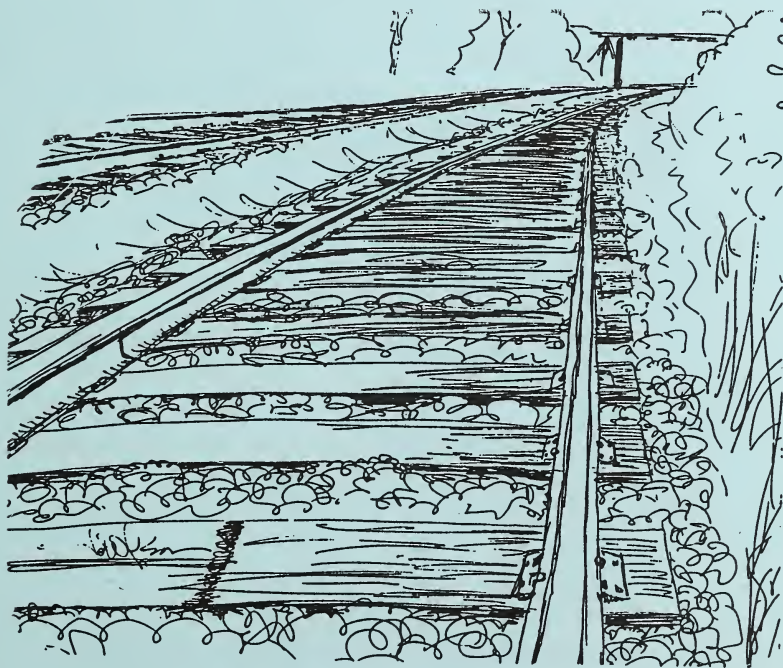
*the yellowing pages  
where passionate script  
forever flows  
under shadows of dust  
Exhumed today —  
with quickening breath  
palsy-handed I held  
propinquity, knuckles pale,  
and with growing eyes  
like twin metronomes  
I saw my father and myself  
and we were holding hands —  
unlike the lifeless portraits  
from the past,  
where I stood dwarfish  
next to an unknown man —  
but with love and admiration  
for a while,  
leaving me both empty and suffused  
for that immortal moment,  
until, resigned, I placed them back  
and with frail, slipping fingers  
let him go*



## WALKING RAILROAD TRACKS

*Chris Nesmith*

*Shakily see-sawing with each step,  
arms wide as wings, embracing the day,  
solitarily bisecting was and will-be, while  
sandwiched between facing palisades of trees,  
thrusting up limbs like spears toward heaven,  
toeing the shoreline of the vast ocean-sky  
And pervading all, two razor-bright threads  
that converge, separate, and merge in our eyes:  
Blazing twin white streaks that quiver in the heat,  
roaring toward infinity.*



*Terry Wilson*

## THE FISHERMAN

Debra Johnson

Long before the resting birds begin to sing,  
He is there with gleaming white buckets  
Adorned with red clay globs,  
And filled to the brim with torn,  
Stained nets—yards and yards  
Of net.

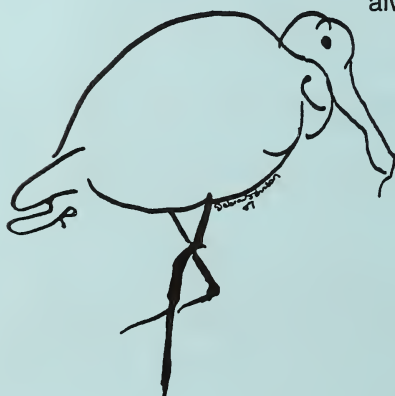
He is there reeling lines or baiting hooks,  
While threading and weaving his  
Canoe into gloomy, damp bayous,  
Or gliding and easing through mirrors  
Of moss and cypress trees,  
Or moving lily pads in still stained  
Water or paddling through thick  
Golden weeds.

Caught in the serene quiet beauty of  
The bayou, he is becoming one  
With the swamp rat  
Cold,

tired,

and

always there.



*First Place, Poetry  
Microcosm Award  
Honorable Mention  
MJCCWA Competition*

Debra Johnson  
3-87

Debra Johnson

## THE WOOD-BABIES

---

*Debra Johnson*

*Near the wall of the forest at the dawn of a day  
Where life is so fragile, the wood-babies play.  
At first you can't see them, and you think you're alone,  
But you are entering a world, the wood-babies' home.*

*A rustle of leaves on the moist, mulch ground  
Brings life to the forest—  
A wood-baby's sound.*

*A rabbit, a wren, a fawn and a squirrel,  
These are the babies that live in this world.  
They're furry, they're feathered,  
They're big and they're small  
In the bed of the forest  
In the trees standing tall,  
They scurry and scramble at innocent play  
In the cool of the shadows on a fresh springtime day.*

*Shimmery light, slithered streaks from the sun  
Fall softly around them  
Another day has begun.*

*Broken reflections of blooming spring trees  
On the still river waters are caused by a breeze.  
The babies are safe; they have all that they need.  
Nature supplies them with shelter and feed.*

*Near the wall of the forest at the dawn of a day,  
God smiles as He watches  
The wood-babies play.*

## LIFE IN NATCHEZ

---

*Angela E. Foster*

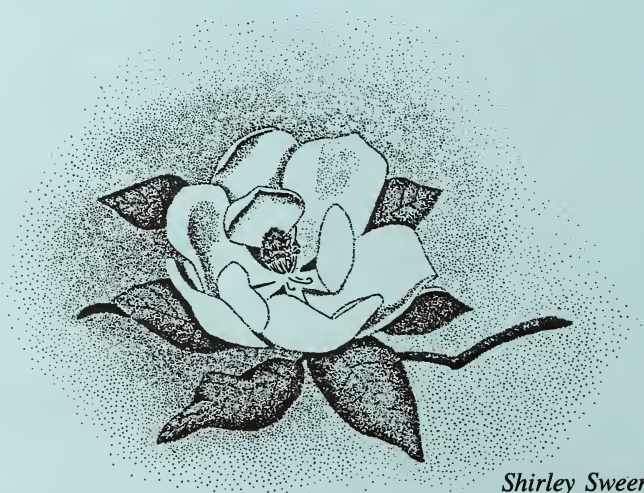
*My life's been pretty boring  
For this past week or so.  
I've had nothing to do,  
I've had no where to go.*

*No Knight in shining armor  
Has come to rescue me,  
No frogs have turned to princes  
While sitting beneath my tree.*

*No Fairy Godmother has come  
To send me to a ball  
The prince invited me to.  
You see, he didn't invite me after all.*

*No star-crossed lover  
Came to me in pain.  
No. Here in Natchez,  
It didn't even rain.*

*Scholarship Award*



*Shirley Sweeney*



## MAGIC

---

*Amy White*

*The frost lay round about  
Mystic, white, and glistening by moonlight and dawn.  
Frozen dew like a light fall of snow.  
It's magic.  
It appears in the dark of the night.  
It steals in silently like a thief,  
ghostly like a spirit  
The magical frost.*

*Microcosm Award*



*Kevin Bracey*

## HOME

---

*Stephanie Beanbe*

Dear God,  
Why does mommy cry when she looks at me?  
I went to my room to get my dolly and mommy cried.  
She picked me up and held me close to her.  
I like mommy to hold me in her lap.  
Mommy smells pretty.  
I wish my puppie Maggie smelled as good as mommy.  
God, why doesn't Roy come home anymore?  
I heard mommy and daddy tell him to "get out."  
Why did they do that to him?  
Is it because he couldn't walk straight all the time?  
Mommy said Roy had stars in his eyes.  
Is there something wrong with my brother, God?  
He used to play with me and Maggie, he used to make her sit, too.  
He said when I get older I can blow grass and punch needles in  
My arms, what does that mean, God?  
I like to pick a blade of grass and blow it through my fingers,  
But I won't punch needles in my arms because it won't be pretty.  
God, why is mommy wearing a black dress?  
She doesn't look good with puffy eyes.  
God, why is daddy crying?  
Boy, that sure is a pretty box, but why are they putting it in  
The ground?  
Oh Well, I guess I'll ask Roy when he gets HOME.

*Microcosm Award*



*Regina Scarborough*

## LONGING

---

*Amy Brabham*

*He waited at the train station  
dressed in a cap of bright red.  
His future destination  
was unknown at the present time.*

*His tiny hands grasped  
a worn and ragged brown suitcase.  
He watched as time passed  
for the train which would take him away.*

*He remembered a time long ago  
when he had parents who loved him.  
A tiny tear began to roll  
down his dirty little face.  
For he clearly understood  
that he had never had any real parents.  
But if he ever should,  
it would truly be a gift from God.*

*He distantly heard  
the shrill sound of the whistle.  
His nervous voice slurred;  
he practiced saying his name again and again.*

*The train roared to a stop  
directly in front of the child.  
He remembered the stores and shops  
so as to never forget his home*

*He watched the women and men  
get off the train one by one.  
He gladly wondered within  
which couple belonged to him*

*A tall and beautiful woman  
richly dressed walked toward him.  
He nervously summoned  
all of his energy to speak to her.*



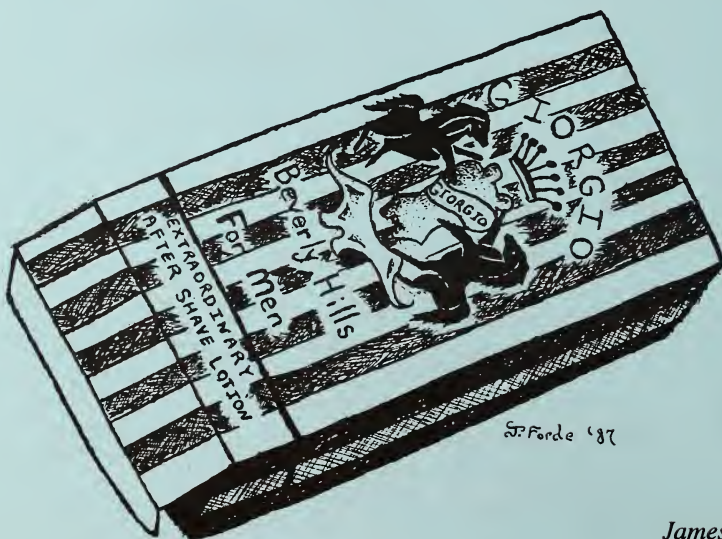
She knelt before him  
and took his hands in hers.  
Her hand so soft and slim  
gently held his.

He slowly said his name  
as he leaned closely to her ear.  
He suddenly felt ashamed  
of his torn blue sweater and no shoes.

Her eyes made him feel  
like he finally belonged.  
The whistle's sudden shrill  
made her rise quickly.

She picked him up gently  
and his hands rested on her soft neck.  
She whispered to him quietly,  
"You have a mother, now and forever."

*Microcosm Award*



*James Forde*

## MOVIN' ON

---

*Andi Davis*

---

"Whatcha doin'?"

"Eatin' cookies."

Betty Lynn was perched on the top of the steps leading to the front porch as Tommy strolled up the sidewalk to the house.

"Where'd you get 'em?" Tommy asked, continuing their regular Sunday conversation.

"Grandma," Betty Lynn replied, not looking up. Her once white Sunday dress was now covered with chocolate stains and she was busy picking the accumulated crumbs from her lap.

"What kind are they?"

"Double chocolate-chocolate chip."

"Oh."

"Tommy?"

"Yeah?"

"You want me to ask Grandma if you can have some cookies?"

"Would you?"

"I reckon, wait right here and don't eat any of mine."

Betty Lynn stood up, brushed off as many of the crumbs as she could and started toward the door. Thinking better of leaving her cookies alone with Tommy, she turned around and picked them up and took them inside with her.

The screen door closed with a bang and Tommy sat down in his usual Sunday place, on the step below Betty Lynn's, to wait for his cookies.

Betty Lynn returned, as she always did, with her bowl refilled and another bowl full of her Grandmother's cookies. She handed Tommy a bowl and sat back down. They ate for a while in silence, as they always did.

Finally Tommy said, "You get your Sunday School lessons right today, Betty Lynn?"

"Yep," Betty Lynn said, still eating and picking crumbs out of her lap.

"You get another gold star?"

"Yep."

"How many you reckon you got now?"

"I dunno, pro'bly 'bout got my third card full though."

"I filled up my fifth card today. Yep, five cards full up with gold stars for ol' Tommy Turner."

"Tommy Turner, you're a whole two years older'n me, that's only how come you got five and I only got three, just 'cause you're eight and I'm six, that's how come you got five, 'cause you're older."

"If I was younger I bet I'd still have more than you, 'cause I'm smarter. Boys are smarter than girls anyway."

"No they ain't. You ain't smarter than Susan Smith and she's eight, too, and she's a girl and she's got six cards full up of gold stars. Six!"

"So, that's 'cause she's been living here longer and been goin' to Sunday School longer than I have. If I'd been living here long as she has I'd have seven cards full by now. She ain't smarter than me. No Way!"

"Yes she is!"

"No she isn't!"

"If you don't take it back I'm gonna tell Grandma you can't have no more cookies!"

"OK, Susan Smith is smarter than me. Can I have some more cookies?"

"Yeah, I reckon."

They lapsed into another silence. Tommy picked at the remnants of his once-full bowl of cookies, not daring to look up and make Betty Lynn think he was greedy, he'd rather eat liver than make Betty Lynn think that, and he sure hated liver. So, he just stared at his hands and whistled quietly while she finished up her last cookie.

"You want to go down to the creek?" Tommy asked as he did every Sunday.

"I reckon, but I gotta go ask my daddy first."

She got up, grabbed the bowls and ran into the house. After a minute she came back and stuck her head out of the door.

"I gotta change outta my Sunday clothes first, I'll meet 'cha down there."

She pulled her head back in and disappeared into the darkness of the hallway.

Tommy brushed the crumbs off his jeans and started down the sidewalk slowly; he knew she could catch up with him about halfway down the road, she always did. When he reached the halfway mark, he stopped and turned around. He didn't see Betty Lynn anywhere.

"That's strange," he thought.

He walked a little further, still no Betty Lynn. He walked on, getting more and more worried with each passing step that Betty Lynn wasn't coming. Finally, he reached the creek bank. He looked but still didn't see her coming, so he sat down and started skipping rocks across the clear stream. On about the third rock, he heard footsteps and turned to see Betty Lynn, in blue jeans and a sweater now, walking slowly up the road. He began walking toward her. When he got to her, he saw that she was crying.

"What's wrong, Betty Lynn?" he asked.

"The reason I didn't catch up to you is 'cause Daddy wanted to talk to me," she said.

"So what?"

"So, we're moving out-of-town, is what. Some place in California is where we're gonna live."

"Why?"

"'Cause that's where Daddy's new job is."

"What's wrong with his old job?"

"I dunno."

"When you leaving?"

"Next week sometime," she said.

"Is your grandma goin' to?"

"Yep. Me and Grandma and Daddy are all goin'."

They sat down on the creek bank and just stared at the ground for a while.

"Who's movin' into your house?" Tommy asked.

"I dunno. Guess you'll find out next week though."

"I reckon."

Tommy, I really don't feel like playin' on the creek today, I think I'm gonna go home. I'll see you later."

Betty Lynn jumped up and ran back up the road before Tommy could even say "Bye." He watched her run until she was out of sight, then he got up and slowly made his way back home. He surely was going to miss Betty Lynn; she was his best friend, especially on Sundays, and he surely was going to miss Grandma's cookies.

He didn't see Betty Lynn much at school, but on Thursday, she made an extra stop by his room after lunch to tell him goodbye. She gave him a box wrapped up in shiny gold paper with a card on it that said, "Don't open until after Sunday School." Then she was gone.

Sunday School that Sunday seemed to last forever. Finally it was over. He had gotten another gold star, so he felt he deserved his gift from Betty Lynn. He walked home quickly and changed clothes. He picked up his box and walked toward Betty Lynn's old house. When he got there, he was surprised to see a little girl sitting on the steps. He stopped, looked at his box, and walked up the sidewalk leading to the house.

"Hi," he said. "My name is Tommy."

"Hi, I'm Sally," she replied. "What 'cha got in the box?"

"I dunno."

"Well, why don't you open it and see?"

"OK."

He sat down on the step below hers and unwrapped the shiny paper. He opened the box.

"Wow! A whole box full!"

"What is it?" Sally asked.

"A whole box full of Betty Lynn's grandmother's double chocolate-chocolate chip cookies!"

"Oh," she said.

"Do you want some?"

"I reckon."

Tommy gave her a handful of cookies and they ate in silence for a while. She dropped a crumb in her lap and picked it up and ate it.

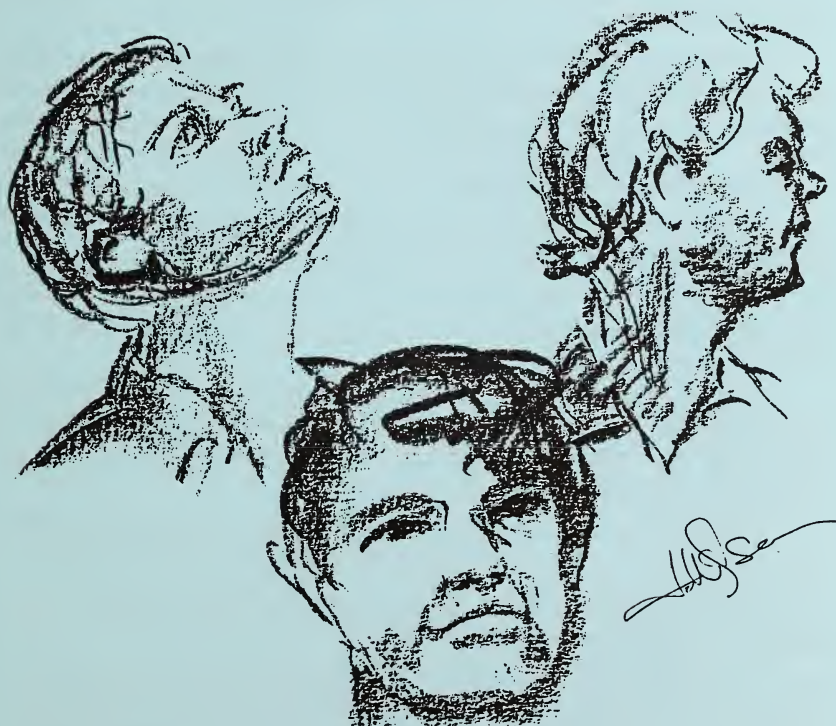
"What 'cha doin'?" Tommy asked.



She looked at him, puzzled.  
"Eatin' cookies," she replied.

*First Place, Short Story  
Microcosm Award*

*Honorable Mention  
MJCCWA Competition*



*Terry Wilson*

## SUMMER VISITORS

---

*Cindy Crews*

---

That day was extremely hot and humid, about the middle of June, and I was sitting cross-legged against the dusty old wall out on my junky weather-beaten porch, playing with my husky black Labrador, Catfish, trying to decide if I should clean up the porch or fix the old, dilapidated swing hanging from a broken, rusty chain. Instead, I decided to do nothing. We were having a peaceful, sunny Sunday afternoon, both of us eating bowls of homemade vanilla ice-cream and listening to birds singing their songs of summer as we sat there. How could a day have been more peaceful: the wind blowing, the sun shining through the rusty screen of the porch onto my face and Catfish snapping at sunbeams, trying to catch a ray.

Without warning, just out of the blue, Catfish jumped up and started barking. Getting up to look out into my yard, I saw two women coming toward the house. One wore a plaid skirt with a yellow sweater and the other, a solid blue skirt and a red sweater. They appeared to be nice, well-to-do women, one of whom drove a red Ford Tempo. As they approached the porch, I noticed they had books and pamphlets in their hands. Insurance or encyclopedia salesmen, no doubt.

When they reached the door of the porch, I opened the door, and said, "Hi, there, my name is John Blair. Is there anything I can do for you?"

The women came inside the porch, looked around, and one reached out cautiously and patted Catfish. "Oh, what a beautiful black Labrador you have; I just love dogs and I have a chocolate Lab myself," the tall woman in plaid said excitedly.

"Really? Well you know what pests they can be. Catfish, move back, you don't want to slobber all over her clothes."

Where on earth did you come up with the name Catfish?" questioned the short woman dressed in red.

"I really don't know, but he used to go fishing with me when I first got him. He loved to bark and jump at the water, and one day he grabbed at a catfish when I was trying to take it off my line. After that I started calling him Catfish."

"I guess that is a pretty good reason, and it is definitely different from any other name I've ever heard for a Lab or for any dog," the



tall woman said while raising an eyebrow. "But to get to the business at hand — oh, I mean to the reason we came by to see you."

"We came to share the good news of the Lord and win you to our caring church" the short woman interrupted hastily looking at the other woman with a glare in her eyes.

"You mean you want to convert me to your religion?" I asked almost angrily.

"Yes, that is exactly what we want to do; the more people who are in the bond of the Lord's love the better. Here are some pamphlets for you to read," the tall woman replied while handing me the pamphlets.

"Thank you, but I am not interested in being converted to your religion because I am really pleased with my own faith," I replied distastefully, folding my arms, refusing the pamphlets.

They insisted on staying and pressured me more. While they were talking to me about their church services and the condition of the world, my mind drifted back to my grandfather. A patient, kind man, who was not easily riled, but he did lose his temper one day. After politely telling about eight million door-to-door missionaries not to knock on his door anymore, he could take no more.

The next ones who pulled into his yard were in for a surprise. He got his shotgun and explained to them that if they did not leave in three seconds he would shoot. The visitors were out of sight in two.

When I came back to my porch from that other time, that other place, the women were both staring at me, awaiting my response.

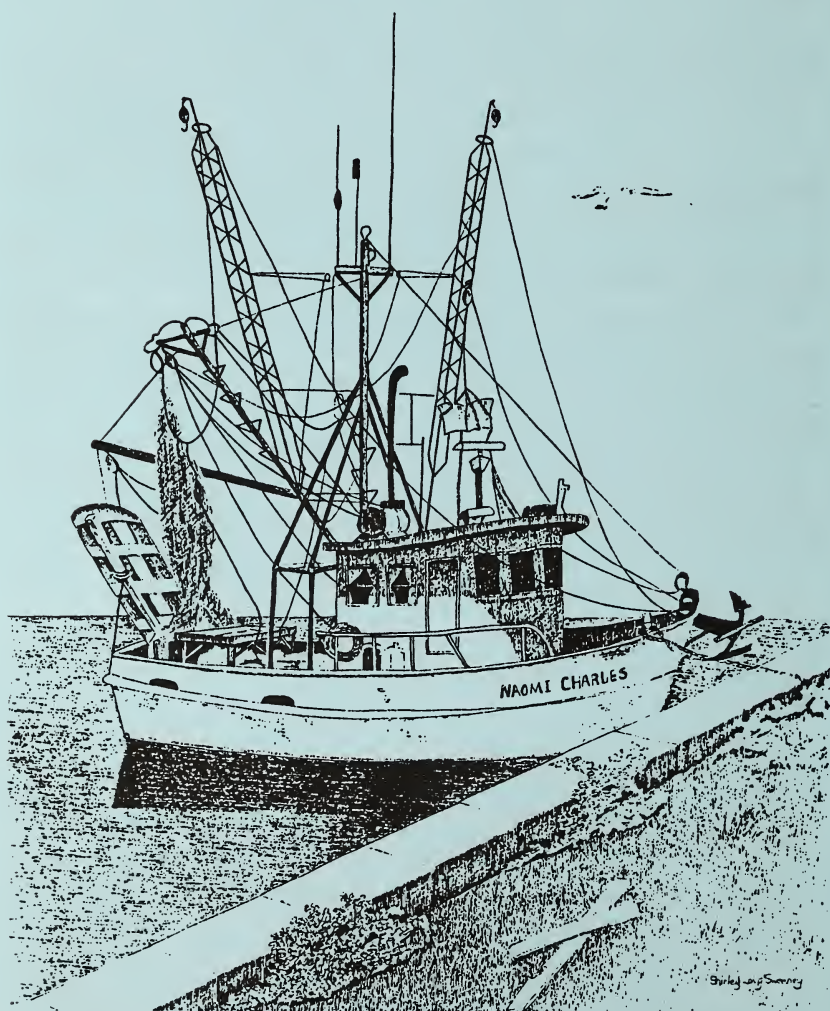
"All your talking has not changed my mind; I would really appreciate it if you would be on your way. Catfish is getting hungry." I reached out and rubbed his head. "The last two door-to-door missionaries he ate were last week; I'm sure he could use another two," I said quite rudely.

After my sinister comments I made from my weather-beaten porch to the two wide-eyed missionary women, could anyone doubt my less-than-positive attitude toward door-to-door evangelists. Catfish lowered his neck, backed his ears, and took one step forward. In less than one minute the eager witnesses stopped dead in their tracks, and in less than two minutes the horrified women had left my rusty screened porch because they feared for their lives.

Grinning as I remembered telling the women that Catfish had already eaten two door-to-door missionaries last week, I began to work

on my broken swing, and Catfish went back to his quiet dream-filled sleep, full of frightened missionaries waiting for him to stalk.

*Scholarship Award*



*Shirley Sweeney*

## M & M'S INCREDIBLY SWEET AND NEVER, EVER SEPARATED

*Linda Lambert*

### I

"Hello? Hello? Is anyone there? Is this a prank caller? If it is you're crazy; it's 2:30 in the morning and some people are trying to sleep."

"Maggie, it's me, Miss Nick, I'm sorry to be calling at this time of the night, but there is something you have to know."

### II

"Never! Never!! Never!!!" shouted Maggie before she slammed the door and ran down the front walk, yelling behind her, "I'll run away first!"

Quickly she made her way up the street to the elementary school playground. As she arrived, she noticed another child sitting on a log near the jungle gym.

"Hey you! You better move before I bump ya off that log!" she said while pointing a menacing finger at her target.

Mackey Montgomery just smiled, remembering how many conversations they'd started with that exact phrase. He definitely could remember, even at six, everyone realized that he had an extraordinary memory. His kindergarten teachers marveled at how the first day of kindergarten he didn't know A from T, but the second day, he could recite the entire alphabet backward and forward, without a hitch. Of course, this didn't help things with Maggie, considering it took her three weeks to recite it to the entire class, although when she did she might have been vying for a role on Sesame Street, the way she dramatized each letter.

Looking at him, Maggie realized that he was thinking again, something which he knew annoyed her more than anything. When he wasn't thinking, or memorizing, she could think of him as just like her, but when he started doing that, she felt stupid, so she made up for it by acting funny. Everything else he did, she loved. She knew that he wouldn't understand what she was going to tell him; she herself couldn't believe what was happening. Suddenly, Maggie was proud of herself. She had been thinking! She had to tell Mackey right away! No, she couldn't do that, because then he'd just make fun and tell her she should try it more often. And, anyway, she had something more important to talk to him about.



"Mackey, I have to tell you something. We found a better job, so Daddy says we have to take it, 'cause Daddy says we'll have more money to buy new things," she said, thinking that it hadn't been so hard and he seemed to be taking it all right.

"That's great!!" Mackey exclaimed. "Now maybe you won't have to borrow money when we go to the movies."

"Mackey, you don't understand; we have to move. Not across town, not even to a close town. We have to move to another state," she said. She was crying now and knew he understood what she meant.

"You mean you're leaving, don't you?! How can you? We're supposed to be best friends, and now you're going away, and I'll never see you again!" he said accusingly.

"I begged not to go, but they just wouldn't listen. They told me that we'd get over it. They just don't understand."

"I don't see how you could leave me; you're supposed to be my friend. You're not a friend. Just leave so I'll never have to see you again!!!" he yelled behind him as he left her, crying, on the playground.

### III

"Mom, I'm home!" Maggie exclaimed as she came in from school. "Did I get my letter from Mackey today?"

"Is it Thursday? You know his letters come only on Thursdays, yet you still ask every other day of the week if a letter came."

"Well, I was just hoping. I mailed mine this morning. Can you believe that we've kept our correspondence up for nine years? We've even grown closer than when we were little kids." Maggie stopped to think on the thousands of letters that had come and gone in the span since she and Mackey had last seen each other. She even remembered the last day she had seen him. She had been climbing in the car for the drive to her new home and had seen him coming down the street. She had not seen him in three weeks, since their big fight, except of course in kindergarten, and he wouldn't speak to her then. He had something behind his back, but she couldn't tell what it was. As he approached her, he whipped a bouquet of honeysuckle and spiderlily flowers from behind his back. He also had a piece of paper with his address on it.

"I know you don't know how to write; neither do I, but my mom said she would write for me if I dictorted, or dictated or something to her,

so I thought, if your mom would too, we could still be friends. Please? I know you didn't mean to leave; you just had to."

"Mackey, I love you and I will never stop sending you letters," she said. Maggie remembered her dad reaching down and hugging both of them and telling them that they were the M & M kids and they were just like the candy, incredibly sweet, and never separated. Maggie remembered her next thought was . . . .

"Margaret Marie! Stop daydreaming and help me take care of these groceries," her mom shouted. "Every Wednesday all you can think of is 'Oh my, tomorrow is Thursday, and I'm gonna be getting a letter from Mackey! Mackey! Mackey! I swear, you're as struck as a Cinderella.'"

"Momma, stop laughing at me!! You know Mackey and I are best friends, and that's all!" she giggled, knowing her mother knew better. Even though she and Mackey hadn't seen each other in the entire nine years, she could tell from his letters that he felt the same about her as she did about him, but since they were only fifteen, she wouldn't call it love, just something different.

The next afternoon she went immediately to the post office to get his letter, but there was no letter, only the regular mail. She rushed home to ask her mother if she had gone by the post office and gotten it, but her mother said no, that it must be a day late. Friday there was no letter, nor Saturday.

The next week Maggie sent her regular letter, asking why he had missed a letter for the first time in nine years, but a return letter never came. She continued writing, without response, for three more weeks. Then late one Monday night she received a call.

"Hello? Hello? Is anyone there? Is this a prank caller? If it is you're crazy; it's 2:30 in the morning, and some people are trying to sleep."

"Maggie, it's me, Miss Nick, I'm sorry to be calling at this time of the night, but there is something you have to know."

Nicole Montgomery, known as Miss Nick to all of her son's friends, was being torn in two. She didn't know how to begin to explain to Maggie something that was going to change her completely. She didn't know how to tell her that the person who she thought she knew better than anyone else, she didn't know at all. What Nicole did know was that Maggie had to be told, because now it was over, and there was no way around it.

"Miss Nick? Are you still there? Hello?" Maggie's head was spinning, and she didn't understand why Miss Nick would be calling unless . . . "Miss Nick, is something wrong with Mackey? What's going on?"

"Maggie, Mackey is just fine, at least now he is. Maggie, I don't know exactly what Mackey has told you, but I think I had better start at the beginning. About five years ago, Mackey went to the doctor and discovered he had cancer. He started undergoing chemotherapy, and other treatments, and in that five-year time, went in and out of remission more times than I care to remember . . ."

"What do you mean cancer? He never told me, and he told me everything! You're lying! Where is he?" Maggie spat out questions like there was no end to them, while hoping there would be no answers.

"Maggie, I'm not lying to you! Mackey is dead, and there is nothing anyone can do about it. I'm his mother, do you think I would joke, or lie about something like this?" Nicole didn't want to be so harsh, but Maggie had to understand the truth. Suddenly she realized Maggie was crying into the phone, and babbling something about never keeping any letters he wrote her.

"Miss Nick, why would Mackey keep something like this from me? I loved him so much, I would have understood anything, but why?" Maggie couldn't understand anything that was being said, even though she was asking questions.

"Honey, after we went through the chemo, all he could think of was not letting anyone see him. All those trips the two of you planned that he always canceled, all the school pictures you asked for and never got, except for that year his hair stayed in, all that was so you wouldn't feel sorry for him. He never let anyone feel sorry for him. I asked him to tell you, I knew you would understand, but he wouldn't. He just insisted that you never know, because you might feel sorry for him. Oh Maggie, you have to understand that he loved you so much, and I wasn't even supposed to tell you after he died, but you love him, so you had to know," Nicole couldn't go on. knowing Maggie was about to explode.

"Miss Nick, I think I'll call you back tomorrow; I need some time to think now," Maggie said, holding back tears.

"All right, honey, but I do want you to know that before he died he asked me to give you his favorite cap, an authentic New York Yankees cap, signed by Babe Ruth in 1922. It was his most prized possession."

## IV

And there it hangs, on her bedpost, that 1922 NY Yankees cap. It hasn't been moved since the day of her accident. Some say her car going off the cliff was an accident, and some say not. I guess you always have to look at the situation. She had just gotten the cap from his mother, and she had told everyone goodbye that day instead of her usual 'See ya later'. So I guess it could have been done on purpose, but then again, the roads were very wet.

Ya know, they were like M & M's, incredibly sweet, and never, ever separated.

*Microcosm Award*



*Mary Clark*



## THE LEGEND

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### *Frankie Spears*

The stars were shining quietly over the enclosure that surrounded the main part of the Bogue Chitto Indian village. It was well past midnight during the time of the new moon and everyone was asleep except the guards who stood at the corners where the mud walls met. It was their job to watch out for deer, raccoons, or other animals that might come in and damage the crops.

All of a sudden, Swift Bear heard a noise coming from an unexpected direction. He turned and looked in disbelief at the figure descending the Holy Mound. No one had been in the Mound since the medicine man had disappeared two weeks ago during the full moon. Blazing Star was one of the bravest medicine men the tribe had ever known. Medicine men were always brave men who did strange things, but few of them would have considered climbing the Holy Mound during a full moon. No one else in Swift Bear's lifetime had ever climbed it during a full moon. Nor had anyone climbed it during his father's or his grandfather's lifetime.

Legends told around the campfire on cold winter nights told of a handful of men who had climbed the Holy Mound during a full moon. Two had disappeared never to be seen again. A third had returned but was completely mad, spending the rest of his days in his wigwam, seeming to hear or see nothing around him. Two medicine men had been stronger than the rest and returned unharmed, but told wild stories about strange places they had visited. The Indians had great respect for men who could walk with the great spirit in places ordinary men could not go, and the names of these medicine men were repeated often in stories and songs to the young children.

Now it seemed that another medicine man, Blazing Star, had returned from his trip to the other world where the Great Spirit took those whom he considered worthy. "Would he be a new wise man or would he be crazy?" Swift Bear wondered as he went forward to meet him.

David and Victoria Evans had just bought a comfortable two-story house near the old Bogue Chitto ruins. David was an architect who had been working in Denver ever since he and Vicki had married three years ago. But recently, he had developed breathing problems and doctors

had advised him to move away from the thin, polluted air of the Mile High City. So David suggested to Vicki that they return to the quiet countryside of Philadelphia, Mississippi, where he had spent his childhood years.

The house the Evans had bought was on a nice little peaceful spot of land out of the city, with a big yard full of rose bushes and little beginning pine trees.

"It will be a lot different from living in the middle of the large city of Denver," thought Victoria, "but it's worth a try." The rooster was crowing at six o'clock when David rose from the bed. Looking out the window, he saw cows grazing, horses running across the field, and cats climbing trees to keep from being destroyed by barking dogs. In the barn, chickens were scratching about in the hay. Standing as he looked out the window, David noticed the bare patch among the small stand of trees at the top of a small hill.

"Pass the butter, please," whispered Victoria.

"It's so nice to wake up to the fresh country air instead of the spicy city air," remarked David.

"Milk," interrupted his wife, hardly listening.

"Dan called this morning and said that I would have to make a trip to New Jersey this week instead of next week, so I'll be leaving today," stuttered David.

"I guess that means I have to stay and finish putting everything up in the house," snapped Victoria. "I'm tired of being the only one around here doing all the work. You don't do anything except high-tail it off all over the world, running around pretending to work! You haven't done a whole day's work in your life. Just because you were born with a silver spoon in your mouth doesn't mean we will always be well off!"

"Well, if you're finished, will you help me pack?" replied David calmly.

"Where are you going?" asked Victoria.

"I'm just going to walk around the pasture and see how the fence is holding up," answered David.

"I'm going with you. Wait and let me change clothes."

"Just hurry up. I haven't got all day!"

As they walked through the pasture with the grass under their feet and the wind blowing through their hair, they found their way into each

other's arms. They walked into the woody patch of trees. Once again, David saw the little bare hill standing alone. Walking through the little valley toward the mysterious hill, Victoria remembered the legend their new neighbor had told her about the old Bogue Chitto ruins. After looking at the mound and rocks that were neatly stacked in different sections around the mound, they headed for home.

It was dark and David was gone. While taking a bath, Victoria thought about the mound they had studied earlier, and wondered if the tales were true. She had started toward the bedroom when she remembered Marshall, their wandering cat. After searching, unsuccessfully, over the house, she opened the front door to call the cat by name. After several minutes of silence, she could hear the faint cry of a cat. She stepped outside, closed the door and started walking toward the sound. Victoria thought to herself how she loved their new lives, the country, the air, and the freedom as she walked toward the barn in nothing but her night gown. She reached the barn but she could still hear the faint "meow" in the distance. Victoria crossed the wooden fence and started across the pasture. Reaching the old Indian grounds, she felt a pang of fear run through her body. She could no longer hear the cat's cry. Stopping to try to control herself, she remembered the tale that had said that the moon had to be full. She looked up into the sky to find that there wasn't a moon to be seen. Gradually, finding some courage, she moved on toward the hill in search of Marshall. As she reached the top of the mound, she suddenly felt very strange. Sitting down on a rock that was turned on its side, Victoria noticed that shadows of trees were beginning to appear. She looked up to see a complete moon appear from behind a dark cloud.

The sun was just rising as the stagecoach pulled into the little town of Marshall to pick up the daily mail and let a few passenger off. Slowly the men and women stepped down onto the dirt streets. A young woman was handed a bag and told that the hotel was just down the street. She entered the hotel and walked to the desk to register. As she picked up the pen to sign her named, she found she couldn't remember anything about her past. She signed in as Miss Jones and walked up the stairs to her room, hoping to recall her past. Slowly she began to realize that she was in another world; a world of the past. She fell asleep wondering if she would ever return home again.

Victoria awoke to find a man standing by her side. She jerked to move away from his arms. He was a tall, dark man about 6'4", 230 pounds. He seemed to be a rather nice man by the smile on his face, but she was still afraid.

She asked, "What are you doing in my room?"

The man didn't answer but still moved toward her. Victoria jumped out of the bed only to be pushed into a corner.

The man realized she was trapped and said, "It will be okay, just don't be afraid."

Victoria picked up a man's razor that was lying on a nearby table and stabbed the man as he continued toward her. She watched him fall to the floor, then she fled through the door. She continued running into the night, up a hill that seemed to never end. As she finally reached the top, she turned around and saw men on horseback headed toward her. The posse finally reached her, not hesitating to shout, she screamed.

The loud barking of the dogs woke Victoria up. Her body was drenched with sweat. She looked down at the foot of the bed to find Marshall curled up into a furry ball. She realized, with a great sigh of relief, that she had only been dreaming.

"But," she asked herself, "how did I get from the top of the Mound back to my room?"

She walked to the window; by the glow of the moon she could see Blazing Star standing on the rock where she had been sitting.

The people of the small town of Philadelphia thought Vicki was crazy, never believing a word she said. But the Legend of Bogue Chitto is still left unexplained.



*Microcosm Award*

*Debra Johnson*



## MY TREASURE

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### *Danny Johnson*

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The summer of '83 was unique because of my friend, Bill Sandifer. Mr. Sandifer is about seventy-nine years old, but he says it's all right to call him Bill. He lives alone in an old house down the street. Many people around town say he's crazy but they just don't know him as well as I do.

In early May, I was wasting time at the city library looking through some old newspapers stored in the back of the library. I was looking for articles about the Great Depression era for a report I had to write for my history class. As I was flipping through the pages, I noticed an article headed, "Train Derailing has Officials Puzzled." As I continued to read, it stated that a Wells Fargo train enroute from Billingsburg to Henderson had, for some unknown reason, derailed and all the crew had disappeared from the wreckage. When I asked for more old newspapers from that year (1931), the librarian told me there were no more.

That night at supper, I mentioned the wreck to Dad but he was not too familiar with it so I just let it rest. I didn't think much about it for a while after that until one afternoon in June.

I had just finished mowing Bill's yard in that hot, summer sun. We were relaxing on the porch drinking some cool lemonade when Bill mentioned that he had worked at a train depot in New Orleans for two years in 1930 and 1931. The article I had read quickly came to mind. Still curious and puzzled by the article, I asked Bill if he knew anything about it.

"Yes, indeed," he said, "That was a big story back then. According to the officials, the train derailed and the whole train crew and a crate of gold coins vanished. But that might not be exactly true." He went on to say that legend has it that a band of outlaws had derailed the train and taken the coins. They had run for a few miles until it was dark, then set up camp. But the bandits were not aware that the crew survived the wreckage and had followed them to the site of camp. Without warning, the train crew attacked the camp in a shoot-out that left all of the crew and all but one of the outlaws dead. The outlaw was wounded badly in the shoulder. Bill continued, saying that the man hid the gold in the

hollow trunk of a tree, then made it to the nearest road before he collapsed and died.

"I suppose he was going to try to get some medical help and then go back for the gold later. But, that's just a legend, boy, don't go off believing any of that nonsense."

I told him I wouldn't, but I couldn't stop thinking about it. Maybe it really is true; maybe there's a fortune in gold hidden somewhere out there. For several weeks, my thoughts were on the money. I finally decided to search for what I thought was "My Treasure."

The day was Tuesday, June 15; I was all set to go. I had packed food for three days, a bedroll, flashlight, matches and a canteen. I told my parents that I was spending the night with my good friend Cliff Owens. I had already asked Cliff to cover for me if my parents called. I left about seven o'clock in the morning, catching a ride to Redrock on a produce truck.

According to the newspaper article, the train wreck was about a mile and a half north of Redrock. I thanked the driver and started walking up the abandoned tracks which haven't been used by the railroad company since the wreck. I hiked until I figured I had been nearly a mile and a half.

There was no sign of any wreckage, but I just felt that was the spot. I then began walking eastward toward Harrisville because that's where Bill had told me the men went. As I was walking through the woods, the gold filled my mind. If I could find it, I'd be rich! All I saw was visions of the wealth.

I walked on for a couple of miles until it was nearly high-noon. I stopped near a small stream to take a quick rest and to eat a sandwich. I felt I was near the place where the outlaws had camped, but I still didn't see any sign of it. Having eaten my sandwich, I figured I should continue looking for "my treasure." I looked in and around every tree in sight, hoping with each tree to find the money.

I looked for almost five hours continuously; it seemed as if I had looked at a million trees. I finally stopped searching at sunset. In my campsite, I made a small fire and ate a second sandwich. Later, as I lay there inside my sleeping bag, I still had visions of gold coins. The visions must have lasted two or three hours before I fell asleep.

I awoke before the sun was up. The coals of the fire were still smoldering so I stirred them up with a stick to start fire again. The sun

was soon up and it was time to begin looking again. I searched for hours, turning over every rock and stump in sight. I even searched in the creek and on the banks.

I was getting frustrated, I searched for, what seemed like, a billion years. Maybe the gold didn't exist. Maybe Bill was right, it was only a legend. There couldn't be any gold, I had looked everywhere. Maybe someone had found it already. All of these terrible thoughts entered my head. I was thinking how dumb I was for believing such a story and for wasting all of my time trying to look for imaginary gold. I felt like crying. I sat down on a fallen log to rest but it was rotten and gave way from underneath me. I picked myself up and brushed the wood splinters off my britches. When I turned and bent down to pick up my pack, all I could see was the glitter of gold that had burst from inside the log. Oh, the beautiful golden money! I had finally found my treasure.

*Microcosm Award*



*Shirley Sweeney*



## NEWNESS OF LIFE

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### *Mary Clark*

D. H. Lawrence reveals in "A Horse Dealer's Daughter" an experience of rebirth. This rebirth is apparent by examining the description, the action and the change in the characters.

Lawrence's description of the setting, of Mabel, and of Dr. Fergusson supports the idea of rebirth. In each setting, the house, the churchyard and pond, Lawrence not only uses words as "desolate . . . gray, darkened and wintry . . . heavy coldness" but also "safe . . . secure . . . warm." In death, there is isolation, and the description of the setting helps set the mood — foreshadowing what is to come. The house, a place of isolation for Mabel, is a warm haven for her and Dr. Fergusson. In contrast, the churchyard, a place of safety for Mabel, is the final place of isolation. The pond, paralleled to the grave, is the means to an end, but becomes a place of a beginning through the baptism of love.

Not only the description of setting, but also Lawrence's description of Mabel prepares for the rebirth experience. Phrases like "Mabel sat on like one condemned," "the girl was alone," or "Mindless and persistent, she endured from day to day" support the idea that Mabel is living and yet dead. Although she accomplishes daily functions, she is not emotionally alive. Dr. Fergusson, too, is described as not being emotionally alive — "It was a stimulant to him to be in the homes of the working people, moving as it were through the innermost body of their life." Through the description, both are unfilled and empty — ready for a newness of life.

The action in the story also supports the idea of rebirth. Lawrence shows this through Mabel and Dr. Fergusson. Mabel lives "in memory of her mother" while Dr. Fergusson lives through people, his patients. While Mabel feels "secure in the churchyard . . . immune from the world," Dr. Fergusson is secure staying busy with the world. Neither is fulfilled or complete. The action Mabel decides to take is described as "a sort of ecstasy to becoming nearer to her fulfillment, her own glorification, approaching her dead mother who was glorified." This action is meant to be the end, but in turn is the beginning, but only because of Dr. Fergusson. Lawrence describes the scene as "dead afternoon . . . dead water . . . dead cold," only to have the characters rise again into the world of the living. Dr. Fergusson not only saves her body from death, but also her soul by giving her new reason for living. In turn, Mabel saves

Dr. Fergusson from living through his patients. She makes him whole—"he could never let her go again." To show this, Lawrence uses action phrases, "his life came back in him" and "strength had come back," to accomplish the experience of rebirth. Both characters "rose again" to a newness of life but are not aware of the change yet.

Lawrence shows unity through the support of description, the action and change in the characters in the experience of rebirth, but the change in the characters gives the strongest support. Lawrence uses description and action to foreshadow the change in the characters. Mabel, being "mindless," becomes aware of Dr. Fergusson "as if she had been seeing him for some time, yet had only just become conscious of him." Dr. Fergusson watches her "interestedly" and becomes aware of her, "his mind suddenly became alive and attentive," at the glimpses of her as she passes through the gate of the field. The characters, being aware of each other, begin to change. Mabel with "eyes of transfiguration" looks at him, "triumphant in first possession." She realizes she loves him and fears rejection, but he does love her. He has "no intention of loving her" but it is as if she has the "life of his body in her hands." With a painful effort, Dr. Fergusson crosses "the gift to her, and all that he had left behind had shriveled and become void." His acceptance of her love and the realization of his love for her causes the change—rebirth of his life. Both are regenerated through the baptism at the pond—a baptism of love. Each is reborn, not only in remaining alive but in being reborn emotionally.



Mary Clark

SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS ABOUT THE DOBIN SISTERS OF SARAH  
ORNE JEWETT'S "THE DULHAM LADIES"

*Terry Wilson*

After meeting them, I must confess that I do not understand the Dobin Sisters. I have met them many times before in many different places, and although I try, I really can't relate to them. I see them as they go about their daily affairs, totally oblivious to anything except what they wish to see. How, I ask myself, can someone without the need for glasses, be so blind? How, I ask myself, can someone with obvious advantages in life, totally not know the world as it really is? How, can some self-proclaimed leaders of society, with their abundant backgrounds to draw upon, be so inept in fulfilling their chosen position in life?

I have little to compare them with, only myself and my limited range of experiences. These ladies are blessed with good eyesight, in other words, they do not have to wear man-made lenses to correct their vision. Yet they see nothing around them except what they wish to see. I am almost legally blind without my glasses. Even with them my visual abilities leaves much to be desired. The Dobins do not see what the world is like that surrounds them. Time does not stand still, and neither does society. Both are in a constant state of change. Sometimes for the good, sometimes not, but constantly in motion. Failure to recognize this condition by an individual, a culture, or a society, results in a form of blindness. And as someone who is possessed of very little sense of sight, such as myself, can verify, any form of blindness can have terrible consequences. I can see the pinks, purples, and golds in a lovely young woman's complexion, or the dazzling aurora of her radiant smile, or similar things which I have been told are difficult to see. Why can so many sighted people not see these?

The Dobin sisters come from a good family, daughters of a minister, and a socially prominent mother from New England's upper crust. They had an education, travel, affluence, and shelter from harm. These gilded lilies were planted in rich, prime soil, and their roots run deep. They were nourished and nurtured, yet when the harvest was due, the Dobins were out to lunch. Although my pedigree is long, I have no roots, as my family moved and lived all over North America as I grew up. And in every community of my acquaintance, I find the Dobin sisters, or perhaps, their relatives. As a somewhat blind, but aspiring artist, I ask myself: Is this a side effect or a result of our society? Or is it only a social function fulfilled by some members of our culture?



The Dobins are leaders of society. They bluntly state the fact of their position. And are quick to chastise those who transgress the forms. I ask: What are the forms? I have attended formal dinners where rules of attire must be met, and the left hand holds the fork for eating. I have attended formal dinners where rules of attire must be met, while sitting on the ground, and if the left hand is used for anything at any time during the occasion, not only have you insulted your host, a breach of social conduct has occurred to such a degree that war has resulted. I have attended formal dinners where the less attire one wore, the better, where you reached and grabbed and stuffed your face with both hands, and if you didn't make at least one token effort to seduce your hostess, she was insulted, and had you thrown out. So I ask, how does one become a leader of society, on what grounds does one base this leadership?

Neither of the Dobin sisters bothered with the social function known as marriage. Marriage, according to sociologists, constitutes the bedrock of our society. Yet the Dobin sisters and their relatives and imitators account for eighty-five per cent of our present society. In my blindness, I have belonged (very happily) to the minority for fifteen years. Perhaps that has something to do with my lack of social leadership, and lack of understanding of the Dobin sisters.

The Dobins solved all of their social problems by acquiring an outdated hairpiece. Who knows? Perhaps I will understand the Dobins better if I acquire a toupe'.



*Second Place, Formal Essay  
Microcosm*

*Terry Martin*

## WOULD TELEVISION DEMORALIZE OUR YOUTH?

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*Shelly Grenn*

Having young children, I find it harder and harder to select decent television programs for them to view. Sure, there are a few good programs for children, but they are far and few between. As parents, we are supposed to supervise their television viewing, but sometimes that can be a problem. Homemakers with small children will spend hours cleaning the house, preparing meals, taking care of the children, and still find time to tune in their favorite soap operas. Too many times, the television becomes a babysitter for a young child, while the mother races about doing daily work. Occasionally, if the mother has not completed her work she can always talk the child into changing the television channel to her soap opera. It does not take a child long to recognize the different characters and theme songs to the shows. I know you're thinking, how can these women let their children watch such garbage; however, it can become quite crucial to learn if Duncan and Elizabeth find each other in the desert, after six months of searching. As you can see, television can be educational, for all ages.

That is why I propose all television should be viewed by children at any age. Parents who would normally be watching "Sesame Street," in the afternoon, could now be watching "Divorce Court." In this day and time, everyone needs to learn how to take his spouse to the cleaners upon divorcing. Children could learn many valuable vocabulary terms like buxom blonde, motel, and adultery. Who is to say when these words might come in handy, during class, in first grade. Little girls always enjoy watching the fashions and the boys would enjoy detailed testimony. Viewing television can be educational.

I would like to see MTV in every home. Teenagers would not be the only ones that could enjoy the many hours of melodious songs, played over and over again. How many times have you heard a song, on the radio, and thought to yourself, "If only I had stayed home from work to watch MTV, I would know the words to this song?" Instead of going to a cute musical program presented by the first grade, with such songs as, "Home On the Range" or "Three Blind Mice," you could sit back and enjoy heavenly voices singing the latest rock songs. Parents and grandparents would be counting the days to this performance. Teachers would find conducting class would become a little more difficult, without a microphone in their hands, to hold the students' atten-



tion. After listening to the loud music, for hours on end, the students would develop hearing problems. I would imagine the best job, in the future, would be an ear, nose, and throat specialist. Hearing tests would be in a great demand. The young could no longer make fun of the elderly losing their hearing because the young could not hear either.

The loud music would not be the only thing causing hearing loss. How many times have you been watching television, hardly able to hear the actors, when the commercial appears, blasting you out of your chair? People spend more time adjusting the volume on their television sets, than they do in the actual viewing of the program. A child will talk through the entire program, until a commercial appears, then he is all eyes and ears. Even if a child is in another room, just let a commercial come on, and he will break his neck trying to get in front of the television set to see what all the excitement is about. I know the companies are just trying to sell their products, but unless we start lowering the drinking age, a six-year old can not buy a Bud Light. Music plays such an important part, in getting the audience's attention, to the product, that a young child is not aware of this. Singing a beer commercial, in Sunday School, can be embarrassing for a parent. That is why I would like to propose all commercials should be made by Howard Cosell. This might not sell many beers, but at least your child would not be singing about it.

Now that television programs can be viewed by all ages, and there will be no censoring, parents can just sit back and relax. They will not have to spend time explaining why certain television programs are not good for them to watch. The responsibility of raising a good moral human being would be a thing of the past. All the worries of explaining what is wrong or right could be explained by watching programs like "Miami Vice"; when in doubt, shoot it out. If your child is into high finance, in the business world, he can always tune in to "Dallas," for expert advice from J. R. Ewing. Sex education in the schools would not be needed any longer; watching the daytime and nighttime soap operas would take care of this. The only problem with this would be parents becoming grandparents at an early age. A population explosion would take place, and the earth would be filled with many young deaf people, raising more young deaf people.

*First Place, Informal Essay  
Microcosm Award*

## COMPETITION

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### *Tommy Spell*

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Whether or not competition is good is a question that has been asked for a number of years and no one can seem to find an appropriate answer. The American way of life seems to suggest that competition is necessary in climbing the ladder to success. Unfortunately, it often means pulling down others and trampling those you wish to surpass.

I felt a need to explore the subject after my friends and I played, what started out as, a "friendly" game of basketball. As the game went on, tempers flared and the game became more of a struggle to come out on top. I found myself saying things to my friends I normally wouldn't say and doing anything, so that I could call myself a "winner." After the game was over, I was friendly to everyone, as if we had not ever played the game. I found out at this point, that even though I had won the game, I had lost the respect of many of my friends. They hesitate before they play with me now because I am so "competitive."

I have, for as long as I can remember, been very competitive. I simply hate to lose. Whether it be football or basketball, even monopoly or checkers, I can't stand the idea of finishing "second." This competitive attitude has caused me many problems in the past and I'm sure it will in the future.

I set out to find how healthy is "healthy" competition. I explored various magazines, newspapers articles, and even talked to a few coaches and young baseball players to get their feelings on the subject. I then went to the Job Corps basketball court and observed people as they played. Even though some considered it only a game, most were suffering from the same problem I was: they let the game take control of them instead of them controlling the game.

Millions of people suffer from this problem. Virtually everyone is affected by competition. Whether it be business, sports, or even trying to establish yourself in the family. Competition, in all these areas, has good and bad qualities.

The competitive spirit usually starts during childhood. Children try to establish themselves in a number of areas. Many times competition starts at home. A child has an older brother who is smarter or perhaps is a great athlete. Parents start expecting the younger child to follow the footsteps of the older one. Many times the ability is not there and

they simply can't perform as well. This makes the younger child feel inferior and unwanted. According to Dr. James P. Comer, this often leads to cigarette smoking, drug abuse, and sexual activity. The threat of failure is greater in competition with older children. Self-confidence and self-concept can be diminished (1:150).

This competitive attitude is also strong in athletics for younger children. Can it really be healthy for a seven-year-old child to be taught to win at any cost? This reminds me of when I was in little league. At the little league level, the "game" is still left as just a "game." I do remember one team, however, that would do anything to win. These little league ball players were jumping around on the dugout and calling the players of the opposing team names, just to break their concentration. If they were ahead, the batters would come to the plate and call time-out. The time-out was to go through this routine of un-tying and re-tying their shoes in order for them to kill time. As time went on, our coaches taught us to cheat in order to beat this team. After we beat this team, they decided to do this every game, in hopes of winning them all. Having the attitude "win at any cost" and "good guys finish last" may have contributed to the fact that we were taught to think this way when we were young. Unfortunately, this is only little league: imagine what it must be like in the Major Leagues.

Poorly managed competition also has bad effects as children go through school. Students who find they are not as gifted as some may resort to cheating and many times withdraw from school altogether. A friend of mine had this problem. In the fourth grade we had drills where we would write our multiplication tables or add simple problems on the board as a speed drill. My friend was never very good at this; he simply couldn't do math. The teacher would always call him to the board first, usually against the best student in the class. He eventually lost interest in math and school in general. Ironically, he was a "brain" at science, but he never developed his skill because of this poor means of motivation, which caused him to lose interest in school and cost him a chance to develop his many talents in science.

The last major area where I have found competition a growing problem is in the area of business. Businessmen will do anything to get ahead and to make that fast "buck." Many smaller corporations and businesses get destroyed by the larger and more powerful ones. Many people are entertained by the T. V. show, "Dallas." They are amazed at the ruthless things J. R. Ewing does to get ahead in business. What everyone does not realize is that there are a number of "J. R. Ewings"



who compete in business every day, stepping on people on their way up the "ladder of success."

These are the more serious problems dealing with competition. However, everything has some good qualities. Competition is no exception. Properly managed competition can leave a feeling of satisfaction because you know that you gave it all that you had. You have pushed yourself and your abilities to the limits and you have done as well as you possibly could (5, 46). This leaves you with the feeling you have accomplished something, that you have obtained your goal. When I play a particular sport, I enjoy playing people who are better than I am. This makes me use all of my skills and talents. When I play, regardless of whether I win or lose, I know now that I better myself and get the feeling I could not have received if I had "destroyed" someone in a game. Take it from me, breaking your back to win has its own rewards whether you win or not.

As New York Mets' pitcher, Tom Seaver, once said: "When we finally won the World Series, I realized I'd been wrong since childhood. I'd always believed the thrill was in celebrating the victory. Now I saw that the thrill was in the competition for its own sake" (4, 24). This is very true. When I win a game, I remember how hard it was to win and what it took to win. I remember the good plays, the hard times, and the overall feeling. This is what makes the game, not some trophy sitting on a shelf.

Competition—your friend or enemy—you decide. Whether competition makes you a fierce competitor or just plain "fierce" is up to you. I have found out that beating an opponent is good for your game—but it depends on what game you're playing. There is a time to be competitive and a time to simply enjoy the game. Each of us should pause and ask, "Do I put others down or fail to support others in my attempt to get ahead? Do my competitive strivings interfere with my emotional well-being, with the development of trust between me and others, and with my professional effectiveness?" (3, 65). Each person can have an impact. The efforts of single persons, like the ripples from a stone cast in a pond, can combine with the efforts of others to create energy that will be a force for good health and positive growth (2, 90).

*Second Place, Informal Essay*  
*Microcosm*

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## AUNT MARGARET LEWIS

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### *Wendi Little*

A cold misty rain drizzled from the gray sky as I drove along a muddy road to the cemetery where my aunt was to be buried. The road was long and as I wound my way around the twists and turns, I thought about Aunt Margaret. Her death was so tragic and unnecessary. I knew she was an unhappy woman; I should have seen it coming.

I thought about my visits to Aunt Margaret in her old neighborhood. I'd walk down the grungy, polluted streets and gape at the decaying houses that barely sheltered the poverty-stricken people. I'd approach my aunt's house and wonder why she would live alone in such a depressing area. I'd enter her home and notice the peeling paint, the ragged furniture, and the worn carpet.

Aunt Margaret lived poorly in a rundown house, but she was a kind old woman. She would serve hot tea and cinnamon buns as we'd sit on the torn couch and talk about her past. Obviously, my aunt had lived a hard life. She'd married twice—both of her husbands now dead; she'd had no children of her own; and the home she'd spent most of her adult life in was torn down. Not being able to leave the past behind, she only moved to the house across the street.

Then about three weeks before this past Christmas, the city housing inspection office ordered Aunt Margaret's home vacated. Again she had to move. Though she was relocated in an apartment fifteen blocks away and a social worker brought her food and medicine, no one considered my aunt's feelings about moving. The old house was her home, full of memories and belongings from the past.

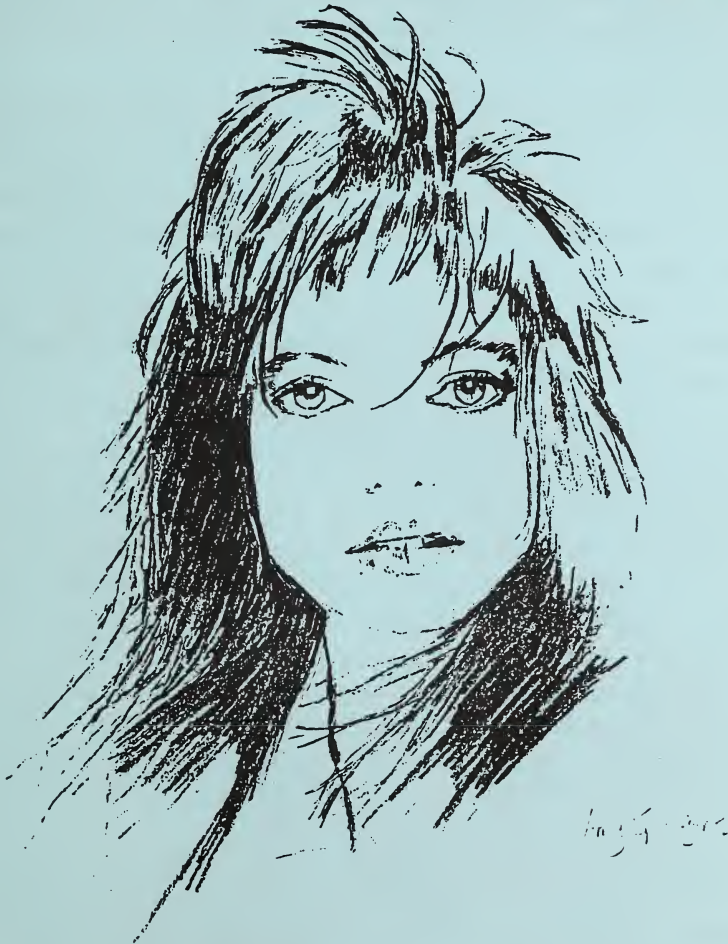
About a week ago, I heard that my aunt had been found dead in that house. She was in her bed clothes, curled up on some old newspapers, frozen. The only things found in the house were a picture of her late husband, a Bible on the mantle, and two family pictures on the wall. Since no other food or clothes were found, it was as if she had meant to die there.

Because of her frozen body, the coroner had to wait five days to perform an autopsy. The time of her death was indefinite—maybe weeks ago, but the cause was, of course, exposure. Aside from my aunt's thin clothes, vandals had broken in the windows and doors. There was absolutely no warmth in that house.



As I pulled up to the cemetery, I noticed several relatives whom I hadn't seen in a long time. "Why are they here now?" I wondered aloud. "Where was Aunt Margaret's family when she needed some one to care?" Even I could have been more concerned about the lonely old woman living in a cold, dilapidated home. The sad part is that we let one of our own family members live and die alone in poverty. If only some one had cared, I might not have had to come here today.

*Microcosm Award*



*Amy Speetjens*

## CANTERBURY: DAILY TRAVEL JOURNAL

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*Jennifer Segrest*

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April 1, 1386 — We are gathered at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, a suburb of London. There are thirty of us willing to make the dangerous journey to Canterbury to visit the shrine of the martyr, Archbishop Thomas A'Beckett. Tomorrow morning at four, we are to depart. There will be about twenty-five men on horseback and only a few women. A party of ten men will ride in front of the women and another fifteen behind them.

April 2 — We got off at four-thirty this morning. We were late because the Wife from Bath was sick. She recovered enough for us to travel, though. We covered a little over twelve miles today. The weather was overcast and rainy. We stopped at an inn near Elkin's Bridge about three o'clock. It was beginning to get dark and we were afraid to try to go any farther today.

April 3 — We left at four this morning. The weather had cleared, so we traveled about fifteen miles. Tonight we have found a small village where the people were willing to take us in for the night.

April 4 — We did not travel at all today. We are staying in the village again tonight. We would have been so bored today if it hadn't been for the Wife from Bath. She told us about her five marriages and how she ruled all five of her husbands. She told us of Johnny, her last husband. They had come to blows before he let her control their marriage. She's deaf in one ear, because Johnny boxed that ear during their fight.

April 5 — We left this morning at six. The townspeople had become fond of us; so it took awhile to say our good-byes. We promised to stop on our return trip. We traveled ten miles today. We are camping by Glenn's Watering Hole. We have about twenty-five to thirty more miles to go to get to Canterbury. We stopped early enough to celebrate the Knight's birthday today. We had an extra portion in our meals tonight.

April 6 — We did not travel today. The Miller and the Summoner have ground fever. According to the doctor, a day's rest should make them well. To entertain ourselves, we told stories. I told the one about the three men who found gold and how they each plotted to get rid of the others. In the end, they all ended up dead. The moral is that money is the root of all evil.

April 7 — Today the men were better. We traveled about fifteen miles since the weather was nice. We lost one of our horses though. He stepped in a hole and broke his leg. We had to stop and shoot him, but it didn't take long. We have stopped one mile from the Black Murder Forest. It is rumored to have robbers and murderers prowling in it. Tomorrow we have to pass through a fifteen-mile stretch of it.

April 8 — I am walking today, since I let one of the other men have my horse. It's beginning to get late. I am writing before the last light fades. We will travel far into the night in order to get out of Black Murder Forest before the murd . . . .

*Scholarship Award*



*Terry Martin*



## HIDDEN FRIENDSHIP

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*Julie Ann Allen*

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From the moment I met him, I knew he was going to make things hard for me. His name was Jason, and he was a poor, unloved, dirty fourth grade boy. Every morning when I went to pick him up, he made snide remarks about girls, and one girl in particular — me!

I was a young, immature sixteen-year-old girl on my first mission trip in Breckenridge, Colorado. I had come to teach the children in Bible School and tell them that Jesus loved them. I was not prepared to have to win the trust of any children. I thought naturally that they would want to be loved.

The beauty of the mountains kept me in good spirits the first few days. I felt that I could conquer anything, even winning Jason's friendship. I wanted to love the children and the majority of them wanted my love. They fought over who got to sit in my lap, or hold my hand. They brought me pictures they had drawn and shared their lunches with me. But Jason was different. I tried to reach out to him and be his friend but he wouldn't respond. The thing that upset me most was that he was in total awe of one of the other teachers. Bob, the teacher that had won his heart, didn't even realize it.

I tried to talk to Jason, to help him with his crafts. I even played kickball with him, but all he did was yell ugly names at me. I wasn't sure what to do. I finally became discouraged and began to show him less attention. I started playing with his friends, or who I thought were his friends. They asked me to help them and they included me in their games.

One day, Jason got into a fight. These so-called friends had made a circle around him and they were calling him names and hitting him. He didn't even fight back. I stood there and cried. He was the one child that needed love the most and I had given up on him. From that moment on, I decided I was going to be his friend no matter what. Each morning I made sure I went to pick him up. I asked him questions about his hobbies and I thought I'd done everything possible. (I even tried to hug him once but he backed away and muttered something.)

Finally, our last day had come. We made sure that everything was extra special for the kids. We decorated cups and plates with them so they could take them home for their parents. When the buses and cars



started loading up, I realized I would probably never see these kids again, these children that I had grown to love and that I knew loved and trusted me. We all exchanged addresses and promised to write. Each child came to hug me goodbye or give me something to remember him by.

When it was my turn to drive some of the kids home, I had so many that asked to ride with me, I wasn't sure what to do, but they **all** climbed in the back of the station wagon.

I dropped the little ones off first and gave each a hug and kiss goodbye. (One little boy named Jeremy even asked if he could go home with me.) I was almost in tears. After I had dropped all the children off but two, I looked back and realized that Jason was one of the two left. I was feeling that I had accomplished so much and that I had really helped these kids, but the thought of Jason got me down, because as hard as I had tried, I couldn't win his trust.

As I pulled into the last drop-off area, the other boy came to hug me goodbye. He told me he would miss me and he gave me a picture of us together. Thinking that Jason was gone, I turned to get into the car. I realized that Jason was still standing there as though he was waiting for me. I walked over to him and not knowing what to say to the child that hated me so much, I asked if he had enjoyed Bible School. To my amazement, Jason started crying. I reached down and hugged him and I started crying too. When we had dried our eyes, he told me he loved me and that I was his best friend. He gave me the cup he had made that day and I knew how special it was to him, so I took off my name necklace that we had made the first day and put it in his hand. I didn't know a child could look so happy. His eyes lit up and he grinned from ear to ear. He told me he was going to put it in his "most specialist place." I gave him one more hug and told him to remember that I loved him too. He turned to walk off and I got in the car to leave. I just sat there for a few minutes trying to think. The Colorado mountains were beautiful and the weather was perfect. I could just feel God's presence. I couldn't believe how wonderful everything had turned out. The child that had been so mean to me and had tried to ruin my trip had just told me I was his best friend. I had given up on Jason, but I guess he hadn't given up on me — just like the everlasting love that God has for us. Jason needed my love more than any other child there and I'm glad he learned to trust me. I started the car and turned to take one last look at the beautiful mountains. I saw Jason still in the street crying and waving goodbye.

*Microcosm Award*

## JOINT DAY-CARE – GOOD FOR OLD AND YOUNG

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*Sarah Armstrong*

Today many working women who care for elderly relatives are forced to take them to day-care centers during working hours. These elderly are often lonely. They feel that they are being left out of life's day-to-day activities. They need someone with whom to share love and activity.

Children of working mothers are also taken to day-care centers. These children have a lack of one-on-one attention. Staff members do not have time to answer each child's questions and give each the personal encouragement he needs. Children lack role models. They need someone they can look up to.

One has only to see a grandchild and grandparent together to realize that children and the elderly are natural allies. The elderly realize that children's special ideas need encouragement, whether they ever come to anything or not. Why are we separating these two groups? Joint day-care is a simple solution to the problems of both generations.

Imagine a child's delight in learning for the first time the name of a particular flower or animal. The elderly could teach children much about this world of ours. Children would fill an empty place in lives of the elderly. They would put the elderly more in touch with the present day. Both would have the special feeling which comes from being needed.

Both children and the elderly would provide relief for the center staff and prevent staff burnout. Working mothers would feel happier about leaving their children at day-care centers. Joint day-care would be more convenient for mothers with both children and elderly in day-care centers. The benefits received by children and elderly in joint day-care would make both groups better, happier people.

*Microcosm Award*

## PEARBELLE BISHOP

*Angela Kelly*

The first thing Pearbelle Bishop says when you walk in her house is, "Since you're here, you can help me clean-up."

Pearbelle is quite a character to be eighty-five. Her hair is short and thinning, with very little gray in it, despite her age. Most of the time she wears a short, curly wig to cover up what little gray she does have. She wears too much lipstick and glasses that make her blue eyes look incredibly huge. Pearbelle usually wears clothes that are too loud, or someday she'll wear pajamas all day; she says they are cooler than her other stuffy clothes.

Just because Pearbelle is eighty-five don't think she doesn't have spunk because she does: more than most young people.

If you come to visit Pearbelle you should come ready to work because she's going to put you to work, and if you are a stranger that doesn't matter, she'll put you to work just as fast as she will her best friend. It just doesn't bother her at all. She will find something for you to do in her huge antebellum home in Pinola, Mississippi.

When the work is completed, you can sit on the long, screened-in front porch, and sip on ice-cold lemonade, catch a refreshing breeze blowing in from a huge fifty-year-old oak tree that shades the front lawn, and listen to Pearbelle chatter endlessly about any subjects that come to mind.

Pearbelle doesn't mind telling you what she thinks about something or someone either; if you like it fine, if not fine, it doesn't bother her.

Once Pearbelle went to the doctor and he found something seriously wrong with her and he wanted to put her in the hospital and do surgery right away, but Pearbelle thought differently. She told him right quick he wasn't going to put her in the hospital and cut on her. "Before any cutting on me takes place I'm going to get a second opinion, and if I still need surgery, you certainly will not be the one doing the cutting, I just don't trust you," Pearbelle told the doctor. Later Pearbelle said, "I think I really embarrassed that young doctor, but I guess he'll get over it."

Even though Pearbelle doesn't really need the money, if she thinks she can pinch a few pennies here and there, no matter how much trouble it is, she's going to do it.



My mother took her grocery shopping once, and Pearbelle was buying a case of canned cat food because her Tabby cats get fed above all else. When the cashier went to punch in the price of the cat food, Pearbelle told her she wanted a discount since she was buying a case, and if she didn't get a discount she would go somewhere where she could get one. The poor cashier didn't know what to do, she had never been faced with a situation like this before, and Pearbelle was ready to get into a knock-down, drag-out argument. Quite a few people were impatiently waiting to be checked out, but that didn't bother Pearbelle, she wanted her discount and was determined to get it. The manager was finally called and she got a total discount of forty-cents.

Pearbelle Bishop is a spunky character to be eighty-five, but as Pearbelle says, "You should have known me when I was younger and really had spunk."

*Microcosm Award*



*Terry Wilson*



## PEACEFUL MAMA

---

*Pam Cagle*

Ethel Kingsly: Sally's mama

Frank Kingsly: Sally's papa

Sally Kingsly: the daughter

Henry: Sally's hippie boyfriend

### Scene 1.

*(Kingsly's house on their farm.)*

Ethel: *(setting table)* Frank, get yo'self up outa that chair and get yourself ready before Sally gets here with her feller.

Frank: Ethel, if you don't quit naggin' me I'm gonna . . .

Ethel: *(interrupting)* Frank, hurry up now.

Frank: *(gets up and starts to the bedroom)* That doggone woman if she don't quit naggin' me I'm gonna put her out to pasture and let her graze with the goats.

*(knock on the door; Sally and Henry enter)*

Sally: Mama, we're here.

Henry: This is a keen pad.

Mama: *(enters from kitchen)* Hi, honey, and this here must be Henry.

Henry: Right on, nice to meet ya.

Mama: Nice to meet you, Henry. Sally, come help me fix the slaw and beans while Henry can go help your Papa get the chicken.

*(Frank enters from bedroom and takes one look at Henry)*

Frank: What the . . . !!!!!

Ethel: Frank!!!

Sally: Papa, this is Henry and, Henry, this is my Papa.

Henry: Nice to meet ya.

Ethel: Frank, Henry's gonna help you get the chicken while me and Sally fix the rest.

Frank: *(still stunned by Henry's appearance)* Huh

Ethel: You heard me, now go get that chicken.

Henry: Hey, I like chickens ---- they ---- they lay eggs.

**Scene 2.**

*(outside in the barnyard)*

Frank: Okay, Henry, which one of those chickens do you want to bar-bee-Q?

Henry: I like to stand here and watch the chickens be birds of a feather.

Frank: Son, did you hear me, which one of these chickens would you like to put on the hot grill?-

Henry: Like, wouldn't that hurt the chicken?

Frank: *(flabbergasted)* Son, we're gonna eat one of those chickens.

Henry: *(stands there and nods his head)* Like, wouldn't we have to, like, murder the little chicken?

Frank: *(cannot believe what he heard)* What do you think we're gonna do to it, fix it a place at the table and let it eat with us? Son, we're gonna catch that bird and ring its neck until its head falls off and then we're gonna pluck its feathers and cut it up and put it on that hot grill and bar-bee-Q!!!

Henry: I'm not into murdering chickens.

Frank: *(insanely)* Well, I am!!

*(Frank starts to grab a chicken and Henry flaps his arms and scares the chicken.)*

Henry: Run, little bird.

Henry: *(angry)* Boy, what do you think you're doing, I could have had that chicken.

Henry: I saved it.

Frank: Do you want to eat or starve?

Henry: Yeah, I like to eat.

**Scene 3.**

*(in the barnyard)*

*(Frank, Ethel, and Sally coming from the house.)*

Frank: *(yelling)* I don't know what in tarnation that boy is trying to prove, but I'm getting hungry and I want that chicken.

Ethel: Where is he, Frank?

Frank: Who?!

Sally: Henry.

Frank: Up in that oak tree with my chicken!

Ethel and Sally: What?!

Frank: I kept on trying to catch that bird and he'd scare it. The next thing I knew he grabbed my chicken and lit out like somebody runnin' from the outhouse on a January mornin'. If he don't get outa that tree with my chicken I'm gonna bar-bee-Q 'em both with buckshot.

Sally: No, Papa!! Henry, please come down!!

Henry: I love you, Sally; but I must stick with my cause. Save the chickens!!

Frank: That stupid . . . . .

Ethel: Frank!! (*calmly*) Now, Henry, won't you come down and eat lunch with us?

Henry: SAVE THE CHICKENS!!!!!!

Frank: I'm goin' to get ole Betsy.

Sally: (*hysterical*) No, Papa, no, no don't shoot Henry. He'll come down, I promise. Henry, please come down!!!!!! Papa, PLEASE!!!!!! MAMA!!!!!!!

#### Scene 4.

(*at the lunch table*)

Henry: This is really right on, Mrs. Kingsly.

Ethel: Thank you, Henry. Do you like it, Frank?

Frank: (*sarcastic*) Huh.

Sally: Mama, I think it's delicious too, and I'm so glad that you're a peacemaker.

Henry: Yeah, Peace Mama.

Ethel: Well, thank you both, I'm glad you're enjoying the spaghetti and my grandma's secret recipe for tomato sauce.

Frank: It would be better with chicken in it.

Ethel: Frank!

**The End**

*Honorable Mention  
MJCCWA Competition*

## THE DERBY

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*Terry Wilson*

Swiftly, but gently, the child was strapped in its place  
As the man, with a quick glance at the young, pale face  
Urged the mighty beast to life.  
The iron stud coughed, roared, purred—a flash of a smile  
To the trembling wife—  
And the man, the child, and the Hope moved out into the night.  
Down the lane, up the street  
Warming and testing its feet  
Then up the ramp, ready to meet  
the Challenger, on a mount so fleet  
That in all of history, it had never been beat.  
Undaunted, the man spoke, "Tonight, Sir, you're in for a fight!"  
And with these words, spurred the mechanical marvel into a run.  
The Challenger, the Dark Hooded One, said not a word—  
his ghostly black mount sprang and the race had begun!

—"Gee, Daddy! What fun!"

Bones of iron, muscles of steel,  
Fire in its heart, ultimate thoroughbred of the wheel—  
Racing against a rider and mount—that isn't even real!  
Over hill, across bridge and plain,  
First under the moon and then in the rain,  
The Detroit blueblood led the chase, then rounding a hill,  
the Black One started to gain.

—"Uh, Daddy — I feel kinda sleepy. . ."

Coming over, then down a rise,  
The Spectre momentarily out of sight, Surprise!  
Up pops a Bear with a coat of silver hue  
With a wailing, a roar, and his dome of flashing blue—  
And a knowing grin that his monthly allotment is due,  
That his duty is to annoy, harrass, and serve trouble  
To the victims in range of his great blue bubble.  
But to his astonishment and grief, his prey stops its purr  
And starts to roar, leaving the Bear far behind with slightly  
Ruffled fur.  
Over the C.B. a voice is heard, "It's Death that I race tonight!"



*I don't have time for you and your silly blue light!"*  
*Then cold, then fear washes over the Bear*  
*As the Phantom passes through the air—*

*—"I'm . . . tired, . . . Daddy . . ."*

*—and catches the roaring beast.*  
*The man looks into spirit eyes the color and brilliance of jade,*  
*As the light in his son's eyes starts to fade,*  
*Reaches for a switch on the dash*  
*Releasing the nitrous oxide gas.*  
*The dream machine starts to scream!*  
*Pulls away from the shadow as in a dream*  
*And the temperature gauge shifts from warm to hot*  
*Rounds the corner into the hospital parking lot.*

*—" . . . . ."*

*The emergency room doors are seen first*  
*Then the straining thoroughbred's heart has burst*  
*And they slide across the finish line*  
*To the attendants the man cries, "Hurry, we haven't much time!"*

*—" . . . . ."*

*The man slumps, the race has been run, he is sad and weary,*  
*And through eyes both hard and teary*  
*He sees the Spectre nearby, the transparent mount is*  
*Breathing in gasps,*  
*Foam flecked, head drooping, sides heaving, as its rider*  
*lifts its hooded head and rasps:*

*"Well done!*  
*With honor and courage a fine race you have run.*  
*Not this night will your son ride with me,*  
*Take him home to mother and wife*  
*And while you have it—enjoy all that is Life!"*

*Later, after the Hooded One had gone, as the man stood in*  
*the room and looked down at the face of his son*

*—"Gee, Daddy, I'm sorry I fell asleep.*  
*Let's do it again, that was fun!"*



## THE HUNTER

---

Debra Johnson

Characters:

Lucy

Don

Emily

### Scene I

*Scene takes place at Don's apartment.*

*Lucy is in the living room. Don walks in from the bedroom.*

Lucy: I see you've been out in the woods again. Did you kill anything?

Don: Nope. Didn't have much luck today. Maybe tomorrow will be better.

Lucy: What do you get out of that? I can't understand why anyone would want to get up so early, put on those ugly clothes, fill his mouth full of nasty tobacco, and tote a heavy gun around all day. Then tramp through briar patches just to kill a poor innocent creature.

Don: Here we go again! Lucy, I don't question you when you show up dressed in faded jeans that are skin tight. Do I tell you you look ugly (*stressed*) in those sweaters you wear that are large enough to swallow a whale or make fun of you when you have canary-yellow high-top tennies on? And for the "tramping through the briar patch" business, how do you think hamburger meat gets to the grocery store?

Lucy: That's different.

Don: How so?

Lucy: I don't know. It just is.

Don: Lucy, hunting is a sport . . . A man's sport. Women don't understand these things.

Lucy: Well, I'm glad I don't. (*pause*) I think it's disgusting. The thing that is really (*stressed*) disgusting is killing some cute, sweet little animal and then having him stuffed and mounted.

Don: Yeah, Yeah.

Lucy: Boy . . . men and their egos.

Don: What did you come here for anyway? Did you come to give me a sermon on hunting or to whisper sweet nothings in my ear?

Lucy: I came to . . . it doesn't matter why I came. Don, you are disgusting—killing is disgusting. *(pause)* You still look stupid in your macho man, ego boosting, slime and green suit!

*(Lucy turns to leave. She starts walking slowly towards the door)*

Don: Hey, Luc. Where are you going?

Lucy: I'm going to soak in some nature. The right way—by watching *(stressed)* the birds and squirrels, not killing them.

## Scene II

*Scene takes place at Lucy and Emily's apartment. Emily is sitting in the dining room reading the newspaper. Lucy comes in with a bag of groceries.*

Emily: Hi, Lucy. Did you see Don today?

*(They walk over to the kitchen and start putting the groceries up.)*

Lucy: Yes, I saw him . . . at least I think so!

Emily: What do you mean, you think so?

Lucy: He was in his camouflage suit and he had his pop-gun . . . You know, playing the fearless hunter bit.

Emily: If you hate everything Don does, why do you waste your time on him?

Lucy: He's a great guy . . . most of the time. I guess I just dislike him during the hunting season. *(pause)* It should be called the killing season!

Emily: That's part of him. You have to love all *(stressed)* of him.

Lucy: I know, I know. *(brief pause)* What did you do today?

Emily: Not a thing that will make a colossal change in the world. Just the same old things . . . classes, lectures, and more lectures. Lucy, have you noticed the shredded paper behind the refrigerator? I think we have mice.

Lucy: What? *(stressed)* Let's check it out.

*(Lucy and Emily walk over to the refrigerator)*

Emily: See?

Lucy: Yeah. Hand me the broom.

Emily: Okay.

*(Emily hands Lucy the broom and then steps back. Lucy pokes the broom behind the refrigerator)*

Lucy: *(scream)* Oh, my God . . . there it is.

*(Lucy raises the broom and swings at the mouse)*

Emily: Lucy . . . you got him!

Lucy: We won't be bothered with it anymore, I guess . . .

*(The door bell rings)*

Lucy: Emily, answer the door while I dispose of our guest.

Emily: Okay.

*(Emily answers the door)*

Emily: Oh, hi, Don.

*(Emily lets Don in)*

Don: Is Lucy here? I need to talk to her. She was pretty upset when she left my apartment today.

Emily: Yes, she's here—follow me.

*(Emily and Don walk towards the kitchen. Don sees Lucy standing there holding the dead mouse on a piece of newspaper.)*

Don: Good going, Luc! *(pause)* Are you going to have it stuffed?!

*Honorable Mention  
MJCCWA Competition*



*James Forde*



## HUNTER AND BEAST, MASTER AND SLAVE: THE UNION OF TWO THEMES IN FAULKNER'S "THE BEAR"

*Chris Nesmith*

In *Go Down, Moses* William Faulkner inquires into the white man's injustice to the Negro and his mistreatment of the land, and the effect of these problems on one man's life. These themes, both literally and symbolically, are intertwined throughout the entire novel, and nowhere is this marriage of themes more evident than in "The Bear."

The character in whom Faulkner catalyzes and conveys his two themes is the prophetic Isaac McCaslin, who is initiated and schooled in the wilderness by Sam Fathers. Isaac's "code of living," according to Edmond L. Volpe, is "honor, pride, pity, justice, courage and love" (6, p. 243). These virtues are attainable only when artificial social impositions are stripped away. In the wilderness law and justice are self-regulated, self-imposed; society is seen as the enemy of true agape love (6, 243).

Not only is Sam's role as teacher and surrogate father of Isaac evident, as his name suggests, but Faulkner ties the two themes together in him. Sam, who is the son of a Chickasaw chief and a Negro slave, is the product of two mistreated races. However, in the woods and at the hunting camp he is unrivaled and, therefore, well respected by the other hunters. In the wilderness the hierarchy of the usual social order is non-existent; a man is held in high esteem for his ability to hunt, not for his ancestry.

The other hunters include McCaslin Edmonds, Ike's cousin; Major de Spain, who owns the land they hunt on; General Compson, Walter Ewell and Boon Hogganbeck, who also has Indian blood but not of a chief. The story centers on the hunter's semi-annual trip to the wilderness for two weeks where they hunt, drink whiskey, and talk "the best of all talk"; they end each excursion with a hunt for the great bear, "Old Ben."

The bear himself, who is "the apotheosis of the old wild life," represents the unspoiled wilderness which is misused and exploited by society. But if the marriage of themes extends to the injustices to the slaves, then the bear might also represent the Negro, who has suffered the same injuries and injustices at the hands of civilization as the wilderness.

From the beginning it becomes clear that the men, deep within their hearts, don't really want to kill the bear, but see it as inevitable that even-

tually he will be killed. None of the hunters wish to admit their reluctance to kill Old Ben, and they use the excuse that they lack the dog that can hold the bear at bay to be able to do it.

In section two the hunters finally acquire "the" dog — after Ike unsuccessfully puts a little mongrel fyce on Old Ben's trail. In this episode Isaac learns the meaning of courage. When he rescues the dog from nearly underneath the bear, he experiences something bordering on religious enlightenment (6, 245). Later, as an adult, Isaac relates this incident to McCaslin who recites Keat's "Ode On A Grecian Urn" to explain Ike's repudiation of his inheritance.

After Ike retrieves the little fyce from the bear he and Sam discuss the fact that eventually Old Ben will be killed. Ike says: "I know it. That's why it must be one of us. So it won't be until the last day. When even he don't want it to last any longer" (1, 212).

This comment on fate and the eventual doom of Old Ben can be viewed as a contradiction of the very code both hunters live by: having a right attitude toward the wilderness. The kill, after all, is never seen as "wrong" by any of the hunters who participate in the ritualistic pursuit of the bear, despite the fact that Old Ben was never hunted for meat or for any other necessity, but for reasons primeval and indiscernable as hunting itself; "they hunt not in order to kill, but kill in order to have hunted" as Sundquist words it (4, 140). The death of the animal is a mere unavoidable outcome of the relationship between the hunter and his prey; his "love" for the animal he tracked is made more intimate and would become immortal upon the animal's death (4, 140).

This paradox of "love" and "destruction" that exists intimately within the hunter carries the theme over to the injustice to the Negro — for the relationship between hunter and prey is very much like that between master and slave, and the adult Isaac McCaslin expounds on this in section four: "So (God) turned once more to this land which He still intended to save because He had done so much for it . . . whose wives and daughters at least made soups and jellies for them when they were sick and carried the trays through the mud and the winter too . . ." (1, 285).

The ritualistic hunt for Old Ben undergoes a dramatic alteration with the appearance of Lion in section two. "So he should have hated and feared Lion" begins the section, and in it the hunters discover one of Major de Spain's horse colts that had been slain and half eaten. Sam

uses the carcass of the colt to trap Lion in a corn crib and he subsequently trains the wild dog through starvation techniques.

What actually kills the colt is never fully explained, but different solutions are suggested. O'Conner explains "In the revised version 'The Old Bear' Old Ben takes to wantonly destroying domesticated animals, thus making it justifiable that the hunters track him down to kill him" (2, 130).

While this view has been widely accepted, it seems more likely that Lion was the beast doing the killing, although Old Ben is blamed. The fact that Old Ben is believed to be the killer is justification for Major de Spain and the others to hunt him down. But as explained before, in the eyes of Sam Fathers and Isaac the death of Old Ben — like the appearance of Lion — was fate. And Isaac, who has opened his soul to experiences the other white men can only sense, realizes this, and understands. "So he should have hated and feared Lion. Yet he did not. It seemed to him that there was a fatality in it" (1, 226).

Throughout the entire episode where the men argue over what killed the colt, Sam Fathers stands silent and offers no insight. When the men obviously can't decide what it was that killed the horse, Sam's face reflects something close to gratitude. "It had been foreknowledge in Sam's face that morning. And he was glad, he told himself. He was old. He had no children, no people, none of his blood anywhere above the earth that he would ever meet again. And even if he were to, he could not have touched it, spoken to it, because for seventy years he had had to be a negro. It was almost over now and he was glad" (1, 215).

Sam realizes now that they hold the ability to kill Old Ben. He also understands fully what that act will mean, yet he is not only willing to train Lion and subsequently hunt down and kill Old Ben, he is ready to do it. Because both Sam and the bear are alone in the world, neither has "blood anywhere above the earth," and they are ready for death.

The dog Lion is an interesting paradox. It is difficult to discern exactly what the dog represents. Lion possesses much of the same virtues as Old Ben, but Lion is unfeeling and indifferent to the prey he hunts. O'Conner believes that Lion, then, represents the ruthless, inhuman spirit of the kill. Yet this seems unlikely because of the thematic presentation of the hunting ritual that would have no place for such a spirit. If the bear represents the wilderness, then it is easy to see that Lion represents the downfall of the wilderness; but if Old Ben is also a symbol of the Negro, then the relationship is not as clear. Perhaps Lion, being a symbol of ruthlessness and inhumanness in general,



could represent the attitudes that have destroyed the wilderness and doled abuse and mistreatment to the black man.

After Boon slays Old Ben with his knife, Sam becomes ill and dies, diagnosed by the doctor as having "quit." Lion is fatally wounded in his fight with the bear. The death of Sam upon the passing of Old Ben perhaps represents the fall of the Native American due to the irradication of the wilderness.

The following year only Boon, Isaac, and Ash, the cook return to the woods to hunt; Major de Spain cannot bring himself to return, presumably because he cannot face the destruction of the wilderness by the lumber company to which he sold it. Major de Spain alleviates himself of any binds to or responsibility for the land by separating himself from it. Isaac cannot sever his ties to the wilderness so easily, yet after the death of Old Ben he himself returns only once.

The rest of the story — indeed the very crux of it — is a digression of epic standards, and it deals with Isaac McCaslin as an adult, and how he uses the values and virtues he has learned in the wild in his own relationships with civilization; specifically in dealing with the injustices of his grandfather, who sired a mulatto daughter and then fathered a son by her. These atrocities can be linked to the wilderness theme by comparing the actual act of sexual violation to the lesser evil of manipulating and destroying the land. Both acts are irreversible and entail evils that will mar subsequent generations for years.

What Isaac does to right these injustices of his grandfather is simply refusing to accept the land of his inheritance; he repudiates the land tainted by slavery and violation and lives as a carpenter in a simple shack he built in imitation of "the Nazarene." His repudiation of the land could be seen as a mere self-imposed penance that has no tangible justification except relieving Isaac's own guilt.

Ike refuses to accept any money from the plantation, but forgets that McCaslin has been putting thirty dollars into his bank account every month, and Isaac's wife apparently only marries him because she knows he owns a big farm. Thus Isaac's repudiation and subsequent "pure" lifestyle, if it is nothing more than symbolic, is a failure. Isaac's life, "a humble imitation of Christ's . . . also denies the spirit of Christ who did not hesitate to share in the life of men, to accept guilt, and to suffer immolation. In rejecting sin, Isaac also rejects humanity" (5, 133).

Indeed, the character of Isaac as an adult has been accused of being far too weak to represent the prophet of the wilderness or to be



a symbol of justice by many Faulkner scholars; the entire section that relates the details of Isaac's adult life has been criticised as being too passive in its explanation of Isaac's grandfather's mulatto heirs and of the actual accomplishment his repudiation brings.

The denial of the land is so important to Isaac that his wife refuses to sleep with him until they move onto the farm. Still he refuses to accept the tainted land. Isaac becomes "uncle to half a county and father to none, unwidowed and without a wife."

The actual good to come from such a self-denial and repudiation is not clear at first, but Isaac, who was "set free" by Sam Fathers, is able to see the far-reaching, long-term effects of his rejections. The character of Isaac has been accused of the same hypocrisy that his grandfather was guilty of, by callously handing out money to his illegitimate children and alleviating himself of the guilt associated with them, while Ike himself was merely mitigating the same guilt by self-righteously refusing to accept it.

Isaac's seemingly passive actions (or inactions) are more than symbolic; although they don't actually help his grandfather's direct heirs, his repudiation and denial will bring about long-term effects. Symbolically, Ike's repudiation shows that, sadly enough, racial indifferences cannot be overcome, and the only solution to this problem is to renounce them. Isaac, despite the world he would wish to live in and remain pure within, is as easily susceptible as the wilderness he emulates. His actions in section four, then, can only be attributed to the only tangible good to come of them: the absence of an heir.

Because Ike, the last in the line of McCaslins, produces no offspring, no one else will ever have to bear the burden of his grandfather's sins; at the same time the cessation of the McCaslin line eliminates the link between the Beauchamps and the Edmonds, thus insuring that those two families, at least, will eventually find peace within themselves (4, 157). As Isaac says to Cass, just before announcing his repudiation: "I could say I don't know why I must do it but that I know I have got to do it because I have got to live with myself for the rest of my life and all I want is peace to do it in" (1, 295).

In the final section of the story Isaac returns to the woods to rendezvous at a gum tree in the forest with Boon. He sees the progressive irradiation and eventual doom of the wilderness and likens it to the logging train. "It had been harmless then," he says of the train that had been effacing and expanding the boundary of the wilderness for years,

"but it was different now . . . And he knew now what he had known as soon as he saw Hoke's this morning but had not thought into words: why Major de Spain had not come back, and that after this time he himself, who had to see it one time other, would return no more" (1, 320).

Ike walks deeper into the woods, stopping at the area where Sam and Lion are buried side by side "not held fast in earth but free in earth and not in earth but of earth. . ."

And so Ike goes on to the Gum Tree, where Boon is sitting, hammering the breach of his dismantled gun with the barrel, driving the squirrels above him in a frenzy with the noise. As Isaac approaches Boon threatens him: "Get out of here! Don't touch them! Don't touch a one of them! They're mine!"

In this final scene the two interwoven themes in "The Bear" are clamped together and fused for one final lesson from the wilderness. It is Boon's and society's illusion that one can "own" squirrels, or land, or other human beings that forever separates mankind from them; it is Ike's realization and enlightenment in the wilderness that forever bans him from participating in society as we know it.

And until we, who are products of society as much as products of creation can have the "right attitude" toward ourselves and our land, we will continue to further alienate ourselves from our fellow man and the earth we share.

*First Place, Formal Essay  
Microcosm Award*

*First Place  
MJCCWA Competition*

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## ENGLISH CLUB INDUCTS FIFTH MEMBER INTO HALL OF FAME

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DR. J. ROLAND HAMILTON

The late Dr. J. Roland Hamilton, an agricultural engineering expert, was a dedicated college professor and scholar who contributed much to his profession through writing by authoring his own textbooks. His first publication was *The Human and Natural Resources of Copiah County, Mississippi* in 1947 for the University of North Carolina Press. In 1957, the Exposition Press, New York, released his *Teaching Techniques*.

Prentice-Hall published his *Using Electricity on the Farm* (1959), *Using Electricity* (1971), *Methodology in Education* (1978), and *Improving Methods and Techniques of Teaching* (1983).

Additionally, Dr. Hamilton co-authored *Economics for Modern Agriculture* (Exposition Press, 1965), *Soil Science* (Mississippi State University and the State Department of Education, 1965), and *Teachers Handbook* (Department of Agricultural Education, Mississippi State University and The State Department of Education (1962-65 and 1968).

Throughout his career, Dr. Hamilton wrote numerous other text/curriculum materials. His articles numbering over sixty appeared in such journals and other publications as *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, *Excellence*, *American Vocational Journal*, *Mississippi Education Advance*, and the *County Vo-Ag Teacher*.

Dr. Hamilton graduated from Copiah-Lincoln Junior College in 1933 and was Head of the Department of Agriculture and Manager of the College Farm at Copiah-Lincoln from 1945-47.

The English Club proudly inducts this year the late Dr. J. Roland Hamilton into the Copiah-Lincoln Literary Hall of Fame.

















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